



Slow Food®

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--Dinner Date--

“Once, Only once, and for one only”

A530 - Tokuoka's here Sat 23 2004 8:30pm

Where: Ristorante Torpedo - Hotel Le Meridien

Today's Program

Thank you for choosing our dinner today.

1. Short Movie

Please feel as if you are in Kyoto. This short movie that introduces general information about Arashiyama Kitcho, nature of Kyoto, a room to dinner, the situation of foods supplied by actual dinner at Arashiyama Kitcho (it is not the same as today's dinner).

2. Performance of Japanese flute

It is a distinct honor to introduce Japanese culture. There is an ancient custom prayed in the moon in Japan. The clear night sky of autumn, we decorate Japanese grass tree and dedicate some rice dumpling (dumpling cake made of rice and/or wheat flour) to the moon. People superimpose your loved ones on the moon. From ancient times such a genteel appearance has been expressed with the music called "Nagauta." Today please listen to the first part of the music titled "Moon." This Nagauta begins from the solo of a whistle (this is called Shinobue). Please enjoy a performance. You can start your dinner when a Japanese flute has started.

3. Recitation of poetry by Mr. Giacomo Mojoli

Thank you for Mr. Giacomo Mojoli coming to our dinner today. (We appreciate Mr. Giacomo Mojoli's visit to our dinner today) He has come to my restaurant in Kyoto several times and he had the opportunities of eating our dinner. He describes the state of his mind and impression as dinner, and today he gives a reading of a poem of his own composition.

4. Entree

I hope you enjoy listening to the music. After the music, the main dinner starts. Before that, since my thought to this dinner has indicated in the documents, please read it. We welcome all of you and wish you enjoy our dinner.

5. Surprise

You have got a treat coming to you. Now discover what is waiting for you...

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My thought to this diner

Regarding a photo at the end scene of the short movie, the plate made 400 years ago was piled highly, and a fresh strawberry was put on the top. It is the moment that blend of past with 400 years of history and present. The new thing and old thing do not exist independently, it is important to blend all the elements together. As we know from history, when it crosses the border, distance, time, new power come into the world. Then, it may have special power, but I want it to be the step in the right direction.

Now, I would like to talk about the reason why I chose these foods for you. It is palpable that the recent trend of culinary field in the world tends to “Super Innovation.” I think it is very important to improve and adapt to the times. However, it is not always true if only we change something. So, I feel a little question on the orientation of the culinary “Super Innovation.” For this reason, I would like to give my whole mind to the review of our traditional techniques. For example, Miso (soybean paste), Tofu, or Yuba are made from soybeans, which have been used in Asia since long time ago, and each food has further variations. Besides, sesame seeds can be used as oil, spice, sauce, or sometimes can be served as a food looks like Tofu.

With a certain technique, a material turns to so many kinds of foods. When I think of it, I feel that every piece of the Japanese food history that has been maintained while many foods were weeded out can be considered as “Healthy Innovation.” What should be added in the extension of the tradition? Firstly reviewing the culinary history of my home country, I took my first step toward the creation.

The important thing is “To review the roots.” That is, to know about the materials and I think it is to get a sense of the producer of the materials. Those producers who cultivate beautiful and healthy food materials support our cooking. In present-day Japan, the circumstance for genuine agriculture is not that easy. I believe that it is the first step for the development of cooking and is a responsibility of the chef to loudly speak for the producers’ enthusiasm through the foods.

If we search for good ingredients for the cooking, it’ll be liable to be expensive. But I think that “Slow Food” means those appreciators are using time and thing effectively rather than essential poverty.

My grandfather said, *“With your ingenuity, everything in nature can be a food.”*

When I think it out again and again with enthusiasm, I think I can give an effect on the cooking and it gets through to the other people’s mind.

In summary, my culinary philosophy is “Living Together.” Food nurtures many things. It is not only for supplying energy to the body but also is a media that promotes the relationship between the people. To share the time sitting around a table with friends, colleagues, or master and pupils who seek the way of cooking is just to cultivate the relationship between the people. Also, I think we should develop the relationship between the producers, restaurants, and even the consumers as well. I think that “Living Together” stands for the mutual development beyond the generations. I think that either scientific solution or creation of a new field is one of elements for

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“Living Together” but is not the central thing.

Of course, a new recipe, combination, and different way of decoration are important but I keenly feel that essential is a food, which is for “Living Together.”

It is nice for the producers, chefs, service, and customers to communicate through a food. If you feel that the communication can be the vigor for the future for everybody involved with this food, there is no chef who can hardly ask for more.

Why these foods have been taken over for a long time? I think it is because it has been necessary for “Living Together.” What would you think about it?

Today, I come here to introduce to all of you what we have developed in Japan. However, now I am in Italy, not in Japan. Therefore, it is a little regrettable because I cannot convey everything from Japan to you. However, I made my best efforts to make you feel, taste, and know about Japan as much as possible. I would be glad if you understand it even if only slightly.

~ Please enjoy your diner!! ~

How did you like our diner and Matcha at the end? Matcha have always been a significant role to play as Eastern and Western cultural bridges and human culture beyond the border.

It preaches no religious doctrine. Its great strength lies in the concreteness of its forms and its foundation in the most fundamental of human activities: sitting together with others, partaking of a meal, and drinking tea.

Sen Rikyu (1522-1591), the man who established the foundations of chano-yu as we know it today, said: "Shano-yu is just a matter of boiling water, and drinking tea; nothing else is involved."

One of the most revealing expressions of the quality of respect in chano-yu is the phrase, "this meeting-but once in a lifetime"(ichigo ichie). These words define the attitude of the practitioner during a tea gathering, and are derived from the instruction of Jo'o, Rikyu's teacher:

*From the moment you enter the garden pathway until the time you depart, you
Should hold the host in most respectful esteem, in the spirit that the gathering will
occur but once in your life.*

This attitude of cherishing each moment is nurtured through training in chano-yu, and has value to all human encounters. When the tea student receives instruction from a teacher-or when we meet our associates, our friend, our family-this sense of the significance of the present is the manifestation of sincerity. In chano-yu, sincerity extends as well to one's hands comes to exist as more than the name of a kiln, the "one and only time," when the pressures of our won self-centered lives are forgotten at the moment of drinking from it.

"Ichigo ichie", the same is true in the culinary world. The cuisine is a close encounter of another kind; love food the instant in a mouthful, acquire taste, impressive taste and ceremony, unique flavor, weariless taste and so on... I think it's a kind of combination of "ichigo ichie" that are in the gastronomic culture happening. We have many different varieties of meetings throughout a lifetime,

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but no two are ever the same. Same place, same time, same meeting, same taste... It'll never happen again. Therefore we open to meeting new people and enjoy the current moment.

In addition, it brings an encounter with people and our history through various meetings. And it could be that there are also the encounter with the author who made the history at ancient times and the encounter with most-beloved something and historical object dating back to the olden times. This nature, essence, preciousness of "ichigo ichie" comes from the dignity of those values.

I hope to cherish every moment spent with all of you, today, and I shall always remember you out there as one of our greatest guests. And with today's dinner as start, I'll be grateful if we can more unite as one people who have same philosophy beyond the place, history and culture. At the same time, it's my sincere wish that none of you will ever forget this day. We expect to meet again in the near future.

NOTE

- ◆ "ichigo ichie" is used commonly in referring to "Treasure every encounter with others, because you never know if you'll meet a person just once in your lifetime". I quoted a passage from a poem by Robert Browning in its title.
- ◆ "The Book of Tea" Okakura Tenshin, Soshitsu Sen XV and Akira Asano, 1998

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INDIGO BLUE

1. History of Awa Ai

The origin of Awa Ai is still uncertain. One explanation is that Lord Hachisuka Iemasa introduced indigo to Awa no Kuni (Tokushima) in 1585, but other evidence suggests that indigo was already an important source of revenue in the Muromachi Period (1387-1573 a.d.). By the Edo Period (1603-1867 a.d.), Awa Ai was extremely profitable and under the protection and control of fiefs (han).

In 1903 (36th year of the Meiji Period), the production area of indigo in Tokushima reached an all time high of 15,000 hectares (1 hectare=2,471 acres). However, by 1966 (41st year of the Showa Period) chemical dyes had dramatically reduced the production area to 4 hectares. In recent years, concern for Awa Ai has increased and efforts are being made to preserve and protect this important cultural treasure.

2. Awa Ai - Awa Indigo Dye (Awa is the historic name of present day Tokushima Prefecture)

Awa Ai is one of Tokushima Prefecture's unique traditional crafts. The refreshing indigo (deep blue) color and fragrant odor of Awa Ai are well known throughout Japan. Awa Ai is currently experiencing a boom in popularity. The common consumer, as well as artists and craftsmen are showing a great deal of interest in Awa Ai. Interest in the traditional dyeing methods and coloring time is one cause of this recent popularity boom, but are by no means the only reason for increased interest in Awa Ai. The simple pleasure of Awa Ai is in the satisfaction of fulfilling our strong desire for natural, traditional products. Furthermore, the earth's vast oceans and spacious sky make the color blue the most dominant color in the world!

3. Growing the Indigo Plant

In late winter, the indigo plant seed are planted in the fields. In April the small plants are transplanted. In July the plants are harvested for the first time, followed by a second harvest in August. The harvested leaves are spread out on an open area under the strong summer sun for one day and then mixed. After the leaves have been dried, the leaves and stems are separated. The remaining leaves are further dried and will later be fermented and used to make "sukumo" and eventually Awa Ai.

4. Making the Dye

The solid indigo dye material will not dissolve in water alone. However, it is necessary to turn the solid indigo dye material into a liquid. The process of changing the solid indigo dye material into a liquid solution is called "making the dye -- ai o tateru".

First, the solid dye material (sukumo) and alkali are mixed in a special pot called an "ai game". The next day, a nutrient like glucose is added to the mixture. Five days to one week later the surface of the solution becomes a bluish-purple color and the liquid underneath becomes a brown

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color. At this stage the solution can be used to dye various materials. The small bubbles which appear on the surface are called "indigo flowers -- ai no hana". After dipping the cloth in the dye, it first turns brown. Next the cloth becomes an indigo blue color, but has green hues. Finally the cloth is washed in water and becomes a splendid blue color. The beauty and variety of Awa Ai comes from the length of time the fabric is submerged in the dye and the skillful hand of the person dyeing the fabric.

6. Raw Indigo Dye (Sukumo)

The raw materials used to make Awa Ai come from the leaves of the "Tade" indigo plant. The leaves are harvested, dried and allowed to ferment. This substance which contains raw fermented dye material is called "sukumo" and is used to produce various indigo products.

"Sukumo" is made by placing dried indigo leaves in a fermentation bed and spraying them with water between 15 to 20 times. After 5 to 7 days, this process is repeated. After about 3 months of repeated spraying and fermentation, a solid mass with a dark brown color appears. This substance, called "sukumo", will later be used to make Awa Ai.

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